

spotlight

Olympic Medical Cancer Center Sequim, Washington

Cutting-edge Care, Close to Home



The scenic Olympic Peninsula in the northwest corner of Washington State is home to the cancer program at Olympic Medical Center. The Peninsula, bordered by the Pacific Ocean, the Hood Canal, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, is a rural area known for its exceptional natural beauty and diverse terrain. For more than 30 years the cancer program at Olympic Medical Center has been serving the residents of Clallam and Jefferson Counties.

Today, the Olympic Medical Cancer Center is realizing a vision of delivering high-quality, patient-centered, integrated cancer care. For residents in rural communities access to high-quality care is often a challenge. The Olympic Medical Cancer Center meets this challenge head on by:

- Bringing medical oncology and radiation oncology services under one roof to streamline access and provide safer care
- Providing state-of-the-art radiation oncology technology
- Providing patient navigation services
- Partnering with the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance
- Providing community outreach.

The cancer program has held ACoS Commission on Cancer (CoC) accreditation since 1993, and in 2011 received CoC accreditation with commendation. In 2012 the program celebrated its tenth year as a member of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) network.

Cancer Services in One Location

Olympic Medical Cancer Center is located on a 20-acre campus in Sequim, about 17 miles from the 126-bed Olympic Memorial Hospital in Port Angeles. Outpatient medical oncology and radiation oncology services are now located at the cancer center while surgical services are provided on the main hospital campus in Port Angeles.

The 18,530-square-foot, one-story cancer center was built in two phases. The first phase, completed in 2003, included the waiting and reception area and radiation oncology wing. The second phase, encompassing the medical oncology, infusion center, and pharmacy wing, was completed in 2007. Visitors to the cancer center now enter one common waiting area and can access both medical oncology and radiation oncology services in a single location.

Designed to harmonize with the surrounding environment, the cancer center incorporates natural lighting, sweeping mountain views, and architectural features that make use of natural materials: Skylights and oversized windows help infuse the facility with light. Even the radiation oncology area features a skylight in the entrance to the treatment room.

In 2011 the cancer center began offering treatment with its new TrueBeam™ linear accelerator, becoming the first cancer center on the West Coast north of Stanford, Calif., to provide this technology. With the TrueBeam, the radiation oncology department has the capability to provide faster, more accurate treatments.

The machine can image the treatment area prior to daily treatment to ensure even greater accuracy. Less time on the treatment table means patients have less chance for movement artifact, increasing accuracy. "Patients spend less time lying still, immobilized, resulting in increased patient comfort," said radiation oncologist Rena Zimmerman, MD. The Olympic Medical Cancer Center also has the only large-bore 4D CT simulator on the Olympic Peninsula. This allows simulation of patients weighing up to 500 pounds and provides for greater patient comfort in positioning for simulation and resultant increased patient comfort during daily treatment. PET/CT is available, which enables use of PET images in planning.

Radiation oncology therapy services available include:

- Image-guided radiation therapy
- Intensity-modulated radiation therapy
- Volumetric modulated arc therapy
- Stereotactic body radiation therapy
- Stereotactic radiosurgery
- 3D conformal therapy.

The radiation oncology department is staffed by two full-time board-certified radiation oncologists, one full-time dosimetrist, full-time on-site physics support by board-certified medical physicists, and six certified radiation therapy technologists.

On the medical oncology and infusion side, care is provided by two board-certified medical oncologists, a physician assistant, and ten nurses, seven of whom hold OCN certification. The spacious

◀ Radiation oncologists Rena Zimmerman, MD, (left) and Michael Shevach, MD, provide the best of both worlds—quality, patient-centered care with the most advanced radiotherapy technology available.

▶ Olympic Medical Cancer Center offers oncology-certified nurses, such as Kay C. Hobbs, RN, providing yet another level of quality cancer care.

L-shaped infusion area features five bays with floor to vaulted-ceiling windows and six private bays with a centrally located nursing station. From the treatment bays, patients can look out on views of the snow-capped Olympic Mountains.

Adjacent to the infusion suite is a Class-A dedicated oncology pharmacy, which is staffed by one FTE pharmacist and a pharmacy technician.

The cancer program holds prospective, multidisciplinary tumor conferences twice monthly. These web-based conferences allow participation by staff from both Sequim and Port Angeles. Participants from the Sequim campus typically include medical and radiation oncology, nursing, social work, nutrition and rehabilitation services, and urologists located in the Sequim facility. Conference participants from the hospital campus in Port Angeles include pathology, radiology, general surgery, and the chief medical officer.

Support for Patients and Families

While many cancer programs are only beginning to incorporate patient navigation services, Olympic Medical Cancer Center has employed a patient navigator for nearly 10 years. Services are provided by a masters-level licensed clinical social worker (LICSW). Grant funding from the cancer program's strong and active foundation provided the support for this position within the cancer program. The patient navigator meets with all newly-referred diagnosed patients, and completes an intake interview that includes the NCCN distress management profile. She is available to patients for ongoing counseling and support. The patient navigator also helps patients with financial assistance issues—from information on pharmaceutical patient assistance programs to travel mile vouchers. She

coordinates with local American Cancer Society transportation services to arrange travel to and from Seattle for patients referred to the SCCA or those needing a tertiary care center.

Supportive care services include nutrition counseling and both physical and rehabilitation therapy services. Patients have access to a physical therapist with certification in lymphedema management, who provides referral, evaluation, and treatment for patients who may have, or are at risk for, developing swelling disorders.

In coordination with the local YMCA, patients who are at a minimum of 90 days post active cancer treatment can participate in the "Exercise and Thrive" program, a 12-week, twice-weekly exercise and survivorship class available to patients free of charge.

Enhancing the Patient Experience

Olympic Medical Cancer Center is in the process of developing a program to incorporate the use of evidence-based integrative therapies to improve the patient experience and quality of life. In 2008 radiation oncologist Rena Zimmerman, MD, completed a fellowship in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona. Under her leadership, the cancer center has initiated an aromatherapy program, which has been well received by patients and families. In 2012 the cancer program is beginning to provide music therapy in both the general waiting areas and for patients receiving treatment. Both aromatherapy and music therapy offer options for patients to be more comfortable and to have some control over their environment while receiving treatment. Next steps may include partnering with independent practitioners to offer massage, yoga, and possibly acupuncture.



Vital Statistics

Hospital bed size: 126
Number of new analytic cases seen in 2011: 424

Select Support Services

- Nutrition Services
- Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Services
- Patient Navigator
- Healing Garden
- Resource Library
- Support Groups, including *Exercise for Health and Look Good, Feel Better*

Increased Access to Clinical Trials

The cancer center's affiliation with the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance brings access to the resources of three renowned academic medical centers: Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, University of Washington Medicine, and Seattle Children's. "We are very proud to be the first affiliate member of the SCCA," said Ken Berkes, MSPT, director Cancer Center and Rehabilitation Services, Olympic Medical Center. "It's a tremendous alliance. They keep us up to date on ongoing clinical research and trials available for our patients. We also refer patients to them for second opinion or tertiary care not provided by Olympic Medical Center."

Through cutting-edge technology, academic affiliation, commitment to the community, and the efforts of its dedicated staff, Olympic Medical Cancer Center brings high-quality care close to home. 